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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Stirpiculture; or the Improvement of Offspring through Wiser Generation.* By M. L. Holbrook, M. D. New York, 1897, M. L. Holbrook & Co., 192 p. 8°.

There is nothing in this book which is either profound or original. Indeed, it is largely composed of quotations, ranging from Plato and Plutarch to Spencer, Weismann, and Grant Allen. Several pages are devoted to extracts from an article by the present writer (who is referred to as "Miss McGee"!), though no credit is given to the *American Anthropologist*, in which it originally appeared. The author points out that if women were independent and therefore not obliged to marry, only the superior men would become husbands and fathers; also that personal hygiene of parents is of the utmost importance in stirpiculture. Common-place as the matter is to any well-educated person, there is nothing in the book to harm and much to benefit the public for which it is evidently designed. There is no index.

ANITA NEWCOMB MCGEE, M. D.

*Maria Candelaria. An Historic Drama from American Aboriginal Life.* By Daniel G. Brinton, M. D. Philadelphia, 1897. 16°, pp. xxix, 98, 2 pls.

*An American Idyl.* By the Countess di Brazzà (Cora Slocomb). Boston, Arena Publishing Company, 1896. 16°, pp. ix-xvii + 19-244.

*Sex Worship. An Exposition of the Phallic Origin of Religion.* By Clifford Howard. Published by the author, 1897. 16°, pp. 1-166.

As knowledge advances, the motives of literature change; for the literature of each generation reflects fairly the thought of the time. During the half century now nearing its close the change in literary motive has been especially noteworthy, and since the chief advance of knowledge has lain in the direction of scientific attainment, the current literature of the day has come to express the prevailing scientific tendency of recent decades. The illustrations of this literary tendency are legion; the magazines, which were chiefly or exclusively romantic fifty years ago, now devote nearly half their pages to articles dealing with the material universe, and these are often prepared by scientific men in accordance with scientific methods; even the romances of many literary masters, like Lafcadio Hearn and Stockton, find

most of their detail and much of their motive in physics, geology, and anthropology, and the sober reviews, which half a century ago harped on the single string of politics, today give much of their space to economics and civics as affected by modern scientific progress. True, the pure literature of the Shakespearean type retains its exponents in ever-increasing numbers and maintains its firm hold on the sentiments of an ever-increasing proportion of the people; but the literature of more realistic motive is coming up from the primary stock in a series of strong branches which promise to yield fruit adequate for the sustenance of newborn intellectual activities. The old motives lose nothing, and indeed gain something, by the springing of the new, while the new motives but represent the later lines of intellectual growth. Other illustrations of the change in literary motive are found in the books. Half a century ago most of the books printed in this country were either purely romantic or related to belief; now a large proportion of the products of our prolific press are records or discussions of facts. The moderately serious books, excluding the strictly technical and the purely frivolous, are fairly represented by those appearing under the titles noted above, and they are especially significant as indices of the modern change in literary motive.

The drama of *Maria Candelaria* was written by a distinguished scientific man of eminent literary skill. Its purely literary character is high, the plot vigorous, and the details felicitous; yet the motive resides in the historical record of a noteworthy episode in the conquest of our aborigines. The scene is laid in south-eastern Mexico; the actors were the Tzentel Indians and the Spanish conquistadores; the principal act was the Tzentel insurrection of 1712, and the principal personage was Maria Candelaria, an Indian girl of nineteen, who might well be styled the Mexican Joan of Arc. The drama is introduced by a summary account of place and people—the best thus far written—containing full references to the literature; it is followed by half a dozen pages of notes in which the scientific knowledge of the aboriginal beliefs of Mexico is crystallized. To readers unfamiliar with the earnestness of aboriginal belief and the depth of aboriginal devotion, the drama is a revelation; to students it is a model of appreciative treatment of that curious prescriptorial thought which it is so hard for civilization to comprehend. The actual

episode was dramatic and the minor events appeal to the emotions; and the author has seized the opportunity to combine the dramatic and the scientific, the emotional and the rational, in such manner as to appeal to two classes of readers who have too little in common, and to reveal unto each something of the point of view occupied by the other. The mechanical part of the book-making is exquisite, harmonizing well with the genius of its intellectual part.

Comparable with this in scene and motive, but not in treatment, is the "American Idyl." It is a romance laid in northern Mexico, and at least ostensibly among the Piman tribes of the Sierra Madre. The plot is strong; a scientific explorer gains the goodwill of a tribe and captivates the dreamy maiden Ampharita; when his local studies are done, the hero passes toward other districts, while the heroine, following despite rebuffs thoughtless rather than heartless, wanders to her end in a lonely barranca. A certain air of reality pervades the idyl—the movements of the hero are made to correspond with the career of a well-known anthropologist, while some of the pictures represent another explorer—yet the romance is romance merely, and the local color is vague and apparently filled in from second-hand sources. Some forty pages of explanatory notes, including a glossary, are appended, and there are numerous illustrations, mostly spoiled from photographs. The literary style might be improved, and the professedly scientific notes are frequently deficient in fidelity to fact; nor is there indication of that just appreciation of prescriptive culture which characterizes the drama of the Tzental. Some local interest attaches to the book in that the material appears to have been picked up in Washington, chiefly in the National Museum and in the photographic laboratory of the Bureau of American Ethnology; and prefatory acknowledgment is made to several members of the Anthropological Society of Washington.

In dealing with his delicate subject, Mr Clifford Howard enlists the aid of poetic imagery and refined expression, and is thereby enabled to condense the product of much reading and some original thought into convenient compass. The problems which he outlines are of great interest, albeit half tabu; and while the problems are not solved, they are stated discreetly and in such manner as to commend the book to the general reader wishing a

useful hand-book. Students of the subject do well to remember that the intellectual differentiation of the sexes, with its multifarious consequences, has grown up with intellectual development; that aphrodisian cults were probably both innocent and beneficent at the times and places of their origin; that they formed incidental and necessary steps in sophic progress, and that it is only erroneous interpretation in the light of modern concepts that renders them awkward or repulsive. Mr Howard's book represents a step in the right direction.

W J M.

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*The Story of Ab; a Tale of the Time of the Cave Man.* By Stanley Waterloo. Chicago, Way & Williams, 1897.

An interesting and well-written story attempting to portray life in the Stone age; a historical novel, indeed, although it far antedates the beginning of written history. A recent writer, commenting upon the development and success of the historical novel in recent literature, finds it nearly or quite impossible to depict the manners and customs of times but slightly removed from our own. The complex web of human activities is too intricate for us to unravel. What shall we say, then, of going back to the very dawn of humanity and depicting the life of the primeval savage? Our author has, however, done this extremely well. Without straining for effect or producing any anticlimax by absurd situations, the life of a young cave boy is told. The terrible struggle for existence, the conflicts of the people with the cave bear and the saber-tooth tiger, their loves, their hates, and their wars, are graphically told, and we become convinced by the writer's art that life must then have been something like his picture. Some little shadow of incredulity may linger in the mature mind when it is found that within the small neighborhood circle of the book the arts of making bows, of polishing stone implements, and of preparing dead-falls for animals were all discovered. To the boy, who was doubtless the auditor our author had chiefly in mind, all these would seem natural; for what boy ever saw anything absurd in that queer farrago of impossible natural history known as the Swiss Family Robinson? This book may well interest readers of a larger growth, for it is by far the best popular account of the main facts of the Stone age that we have ever seen.